

**EUROPEAN HANDBOOK FOR GENDER  
EQUALITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION IN SPORT:  
A PERSPECTIVE THROUGH THE ERASMUS  
+ WOMEN-UP PROJECT**

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## CHAPTER 3: SPORT LEGISLATION AND POSSIBLE GENDER DISCRIMINATION IN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

Gender equality in sports is reasonably expected to be perceived as providing appropriate conditions in training, performance, evaluation and career perspectives so as both genders be able to fully use their physical, emotional and intellectual potential, considering possible gender-related social or biological peculiarities (e.g. family-derived tasks, different physical parameters etc). In other words, gender equality does not mean “same” but “comparable” or “fairly compared” conditions.

Changes in gender roles in response to changing economic, social as well as political circumstances also had an influence on sport, especially in relation to participation. Since the Olympic Games in Paris at the beginning of 20th century, where twenty-two women of about thousand athletes participated in five sports, the involvement of women in the Olympic Movement at all levels has changed gradually. The earlier second decade, there were twenty-four female members out of more than hundred members in IOC. Moreover, at the decision-making level the progress the situation was less impressive: there were no female members of the International Olympic Committee between from the first contemporary Olympic Games to early 80s.

Apart from the importance of sport in daily life, the need of promoting gender equality in sport in its broadest sense has proved also not negligible. The lack of gender equality in sport could also be seen as a missed opportunity for the sport sector. A gender-friendly climate could and should become a standard feature of sport institutions and there has been no doubt that the sport world will be the first to reap the benefits (Andersen & Bakken, 2019; Andersson & Barker-Ruchti, 2019). The aim of this book chapter consists in emphasizing these shortcomings in the gender-specific equality in sport sector and the necessity of relevant strategies. The relevance of the legislation approaches to equality and equity issues in relation to gender position within sport activity is obvious, as the legislator shapes the room of action and implementation capacity of the appropriate strategies and practices. The importance of the legislator’s orientations has proved also undoubtful, as these might be decisive not only for the formulation of the basic policy contents but also for the priority setting.

Instead of considering gender issues to be irrelevant, or even a hindrance to the core policy goals in sport, stakeholders in sport should develop a more comprehensive understanding of the value of gender equality as a condition of social as well as economic progress. Better educated and skilled women and men are expected to be interesting benefits on personal, organisational and societal levels. Knijnik (2023) found a calling “blind spot” within the policies, codes and procedures followed without a focused framework for women and girls regarding sport participation, stating that increased numbers of female athletes in associations does not consist a deterrent against discrimination and harassment for females in the sports field.

It’s worth mentioning that the Commissioners call for more actions and further cooperation which had been based on the persisting gaps at all levels between women as well as men in sport and the lack of implementation of concrete measures. In addition, the number of women in leadership positions in sport governing bodies in Europe still remains very low (average ten percent) with exceptions in some EU Member States as well as at local level. Monitoring tools (such as the Euro-barometer) on Sport and Physical Activity 2014 highlighted that the participation of girls and women in Europe in general might be still not at the same levels of participation as boys as well as men (e.g., Abdelghaffar & Siham, 2019; Council of the European Union, 2014; Jenkin et al., 2017). Furthermore, employed female coaches seem to be the minority of the coaches in Europe while often earn less per month on average than their male colleagues with differences of up to thousand euros reported for the same type of job. Also, despite some positive action substantial changes through legislation as well as policies have rarely taken place, with the

exception of the Nordic countries, UK and France as well as in federations such as the International Triathlon Union. Possession of capital and power demonstrate inequalities in the field of sports with unequal pay for equal work between men and women and a shortage of opportunities for the latter on the issue of participation opportunities including fewer facilities and unequal chances of investment in women sport (Shi, 2023).

The afore-mentioned details make sport not as gender balanced as it should be and highlights the need to improve the gender climate and equality in sport through concrete measures, supported by sustainable policies and, where necessary, legal frameworks. Besides, it remains a general assumption that gender as a cultural product reinforced by the eminence of patriarchal society diffusing different expectations for men and women has restricted female participation in sport regardless of the promotion of woman participation in the Olympic games (Sherry, 2016). In 2010, the results of the Euro-barometer on gender equality indicated that Europeans might be concerned about the sexist stereotypes found in the world of sport. It is considered to be an encouraging sign that many sports organisations have expressed their commitment to gender equality in sport, as by the beginning of 2014 more than four hundred sport organisations worldwide had endorsed the Brighton Declaration on Women and Sport. Almost twenty years after the Brighton Declaration, there might be still the need to 'Lead the Change' as the motto of the next IWG World Conference in Helsinki 2014 hails. So, it cannot be denied that at the same time the implementation of measures and actions have not happened. In any case, there have been many positive activities, projects and actions taken for women in sport by the signatories of the Brighton Declaration. However, it seems that many sports organisations have not been able to institutionalize gender mainstreaming within sport. Thus, it has proved still questionable how sustainable these activities have been and how many mainstream sports organisations were involved.

Equal opportunities could be promoted at different levels as well as by different organisations where they have the competence to handle these (Flake et al., 2013). This support has been needed if there is going to be further progress in implementing gender equality policies in sport. A key to the success of this would be the commitment of stakeholders inside as well as outside the sport sector in order to secure support for political actions or supporting measures (Grima et al., 2017).

Access to clubs, improved access to coaching courses, changing stereotypes as well as safety and security arrangements would enhance gender equality in sport. These measures or actions should be primarily the responsibility of national as well as local stakeholders and efforts should be made at a local level to address the role of women and men in the governing bodies of sport. However, such a schedule should not depend on private local initiatives only and there exists a need for a sustainable approach to the whole sport sector, as part of a policy and/or legal framework. Pavlidis et al. (2023) refer to the logic and desire around which Australian Football League transforms in a process of inclusion of women in a male-dominated professional sport and the need to take precautions so as that this procedure is not disrupted in the future.

It is regarded as a common value of the EU, and as a necessary condition for the achievement of the EU objectives of growth, employment as well as social cohesion. Additionally, to national or local approach, equality between women and men is regarded as a fundamental principle of the EU and enshrined in the Treaties. The huge gender gap existing in the decision-making bodies of European sport (Downward et al., 2014; Eime et al., 2015), the lack of attention for gender equality and the key positions these organisations could play regarding media as well as sponsor contracts, crucial for the right coverage of women in sport, justify a European approach. The necessity of a European approach goes beyond the valuable mutual exchange of learning experiences as well as effective practice and the support for the development of national strategies. Moreover, an international approach could also be helpful in topics, such as sexualized violence in sport, which could be sensitive and delicate at a national level facing cross border challenges.

## 2. SHAPING SPORTS PARTICIPATION AND GOVERNANCE AT INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND SUPRANATIONAL LEVEL

It has been one of the tasks and objectives of the EU, while mainstreaming the principle of equality between women and men in all its activities represents a specific mission for the Union, as provided by the Ar.2 and 3(3) TEU and Ar.8 TFEU. Equality between women and men is regarded as a fundamental principle of the EU enshrined in the Treaties.

It was noticeable that gender stereotypes as well as traditional gender roles, including the traditional gender models of masculinity and femininity (Culvin, et al., 2023; Bowes, & Culvin, 2021) in the world of sport, affect access to as well as participation in many levels and fields of sport, as well as the organisational

cultures of sport administrations as well as sporting bodies; despite the progress achieved, gender inequalities persist between women and men in sport, in particular concerning: access to and practice of sport, physical education and physical activity; also sport and its coverage by media can contribute to perpetuating and/or challenging gender stereotypes across Europe; media coverage of women athletes as well as of women's sport; reintegration into the labour market after the end of an athletic career; access to responsibilities, participation in sports governing bodies as well as decision-making roles; access to resources, salaries, financial incentives as well as sports facilities; (Portela-Pino et al., 2020), gender-based violence including harassment or abuse (Somerset, & Hoare, 2018). Nevertheless, given the significance of gender gaps in many fields of sport, gender mainstreaming still needs to be complemented by positive measures (European Commission, 2014; 2022). In order to achieve de facto equality between women and men in sport or through sport, the structural character of gender inequality must be addressed by adopting the strategy of gender mainstreaming or involving all the relevant institutions and actors in its implementation. Thus, numerous legal and policy tools have been formulated at intergovernmental level (e.g. Committee of Ministers) as well as supranational level (e.g. European Parliament, Commission), such as:

- The Declaration adopted during the 4th International Conference of Ministers and Senior Officials Responsible for Physical Education and Sport;
- The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979) condemn discrimination against women in all forms, and agree to pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating discrimination against women and of achieving substantive gender equality, also in sport and physical education;
- Recommendation Rec(92)13-rev of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the revised European Sports Charter underlines the right for everyone to participate in sport and recommends that sport be kept free of any kind of discrimination, in particular on grounds of sex;
- The Brighton Declaration on Women and Sport (1994), having the aim of developing a sporting culture that enables and values the full involvement of women and girls in every aspect of sport;
- Parliamentary Assembly Resolution 1092 (1996) on “Discrimination against women in the field of sport and more particularly in the Olympic Games”;
- Recommendation Rec(98)14 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on gender mainstreaming, which recommends that the governments of member States encourage decision makers to “create an enabling environment and facilitate conditions for the implementation of gender mainstreaming in the public sector”;
- The Athens Declaration on Women and Sport of 2001;
- Council of Europe Conferences of European Ministers, notably Resolution III adopted by Ministers responsible for Sport (Budapest, October 2004);
- Recommendation Rec(2005)8 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the principles of good governance in sport, which states that the implementation of the principles of good governance in sport is a key element in the promotion of gender mainstreaming in sport;
- Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 1701 (2005) on “Discrimination against women and girls in sport”, as well as the reply to it adopted by the Committee of Ministers (cf. CM/AS(2005)Rec1701-final);
- Declaration entitled “Making gender equality a reality” of May 2009, whereby the Committee of Ministers urged member States to commit themselves fully to bridging the gap between equality in fact and equality in law and to accelerate the achievement of this aim by using gender mainstreaming effectively;
- The Strategy for Equality between Women and Men 2010-2015 (Doc. 13767/10), which identified five priority areas for action: equal economic independence; equal pay for equal work or work of equal value; equality in decision-making; dignity, integrity and an end to gender-based violence; and gender equality in external actions, the Commission has undertaken to encourage the mainstreaming of gender issues into all EU policies;
- The Resolution adopted by Ministers responsible for Equality between Women and Men (Baku, May 2010), where it was acknowledged that the gap between de jure and de facto gender equality can only be bridged by the adoption of specific legislation, policies and programmes and their

implementation through the use of positive actions including temporary special measures and gender mainstreaming, including gender budgeting;

- Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)9 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the revised Code of Sports Ethics demanding the “equal participation of women, girls, men and boys in all individual and/or team sports without gender-based discrimination”;

- The Communication on the development of the EU dimension in sport (Doc. 5597/11) the Commission proposed actions focussing especially on access to sport for immigrant women and women from ethnic minorities, access to decision-making positions and the fight against gender stereotypes.

- Recommendation CM/Rec(2013)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on gender equality and media;

- The Berlin Declaration adopted during the 5th International Conference of Ministers and Senior Officials Responsible for Physical Education and Sport in May 2013;

- Recommendation CM/Rec(2015)2 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on gender mainstreaming in sport.

### 3. GENDER DISCRIMINATION IN SPORTS: UNEQUAL PAY, LIMITED OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN'S SPORTS, AND LACK OF SUPPORT FOR FEMALE ATHLETES

Labour market inequalities between women and men might be significantly accentuated in sport (Spiteri et al., 2019; Storr et al., 2022). In the EU labour market as a whole, women occupy only a third of managerial positions. They also account for the majority of part-time work while their pay is considered to be significantly lower. The gender pay gap was significant. Women earn on average fourteen percent less than men, rising to twenty three percent at managerial level. The pay as well as pension gap was linked to cultural, legal, social as well as economic factors which go beyond the issue of equal pay for equal work, including childcare, tax systems, education as well as cultural norms.

Out of fifty two European sports federations twenty do not have a woman on their boards, forty six have less than twenty five percent women on their boards, and only two have a female president. There have been only three female presidents among European National Olympic Committees, whereas the percentage of women on NOC Executive Committees was fourteen percent and only seven of them had a female secretary general. The percentages of women in decision-making positions vary across Europe as well as among different sports: fifteen percent of the executives in German sports federations were women. The equivalent numbers for Finland, Sweden as well as Norway were twenty seven percent, thirty three percent and thirty seven percent, respectively. In another study seven of the eleven football federations did not have a single woman on their boards, whereas three sport federations (two in gymnastics and one in aquatics) had around fifty percent women. Women seem to be also underrepresented in governmental sport bodies. Only six out of twenty-eight ministers responsible for sport were female and twenty eight percent of the national sport directors in the EU Member States were women.

Women seem to be under-represented in many areas of sport. According to the Eurobarometer on Sport and Physical Activity (2013), girls as well as women still participate less than boys and men. Gender equality in sport was expected to be economically beneficial for all stakeholders in sport and related industries, including the media because of higher participation and popularity of sport as well as a growing workforce. Employment in sport was growing faster than total employment (more than eight percent in the last five years before the end of the second decade of 21st century). In 2020, more than one million people worked in sport in the EU (less than one percent of all employment). Young people as well as men seem to be well represented: thirty three percent of employees were fifteen to twenty-nine years old and almost sixty percent were men – a higher share than in total employment. Moreover, a higher percentage of job positions were lost in sport than in the wider economy: four percent as compared with more than one percent. In terms of the impact of corona virus, of the fifty-four thousand job positions lost in sport from at the end of the second decade of 21st century, fifty-two thousand were held by women. Women were even under-represented in leading authorship and editorial board positions in sport sciences indicating that that additional kind of gender inequality may constitute an alert worth investigating further (Rosales et al., 2021)

Many international or national sport organisations reproduce them by favouring men's competitions in their own communication channels. Editorial choices often favour men's sports because most sports

journalists/decision-makers were men. Moreover, biased media coverage has various consequences, two of which have big impacts: firstly, the lack of visibility of women leads to a lack of role models which has direct consequences on young women's participation in sport and their future involvement in other roles such as coaching or board membership; secondly, the lack of media exposure has a direct impact on the economic value of women's sport, making it harder to attract sponsors or guarantee fair wages. These biases were however not limited to media coverage. In so doing, they actively participate in the preservation of male hegemony as well as the spread of negative gender stereotypes. Women seem to have received media coverage only in case of representing their home nation at an Olympic event, proving hegemony of men's Olympic coverage (Antunovic & Bartoluci, 2022). Finally, competition scheduling or commercial investment also impacts on media coverage of women's sport.

#### 4. ECONOMICAL ASPECTS OF FEMALE PARTICIPATION IN SPORT

Issues such as the pay gap between women and men in professional sports as well as the accessibility and the direct promotion of sport participation by specific groups of girls as well as women should also receive attention in national or federations' strategies, depending on the context of the country or sport. The pay and pension gap was linked to cultural, legal, social as well as economic factors which go beyond the issue of equal pay for equal work, as it includes childcare, tax benefits, education or cultural norms (Bachmann & Bechara, 2018). Quality of management processes should be benchmarked against standards set for management design, mapping, implementation, support as well as monitoring. To realise the implementation of strategies a solid management process framework is considered to be inevitably required, transforming the social mission into desired change (Mutter, & Pawlowski, 2014; Hickey, & Mason, 2017). It is, thus, widely acceptable that each Member State should develop, monitor and also review a national action plan on gender equality in sport in close cooperation with the main stakeholders, which could be part of the national gender equality strategy and/or national sport policy. Without these standards, stakeholders' efforts to implement a national plan become superficial.

In 90s, the European Broadcasting Union, together with its member organisations, devised a Charter for Equal Opportunities for Women in Broadcasting to demonstrate the commitment of European Public service media to the rights of women working in the media, including fair and equal treatment at work, equal opportunities, equal pay or benefits etc (Wicker et al., 2021). Economic capital seems to play an important role for women in participation in organized youth sport from an earlier age, providing them with knowledge about the recruiting process as well. Thus, women from lower-income backgrounds had fewer opportunities to develop skill and less assistance with the recruiting process (McGovern, 2018)

It was also worth underlining that the salary gaps in women sports proved to be extremely wide. The Sporting Intelligence Global Sports Salaries Survey compared the wages of women and men as well as calculated an extremely disproportional inequality ratio in payment. Moreover, in the first division of women's football in France, the gap ratio was quite high. The differences were particularly marked in an environment where a very small number of athletes earn very high wages. Popular discourses have presented the professionalisation of some women's sports as evidence of significant progress in gender equality in the sport without however mentioning the inequalities existing in terms of wages (Lloyd & Woodhouse, 2023). However, the increasing interest in women's sport must lead to improvements in the working or social conditions of women in this sector.

#### 5. STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING GENDER EQUITY IN SPORTS

Literature reinforces that despite growing participation in community sport, this does not constitute reshaping of gender relations. Policies promoting gender equity in sport need to enforce changes in club environments while increasing women's participation (Jeanes et al., 2021). Sport has been included in the EU's social as well as economic goals and equality between men and women includes equality in the labour market which was in general constituted by the Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union. In the European Pillar of Social Rights, the EU pledges to foster equality of treatment and opportunity between women and men in all areas (Mogaji et al., 2021).

Given the number as well as diversity of the stakeholders and the necessity of increased investment to overcome the current chronic underfunding of women's sport – with up to seventy percent of available resources currently spent on boys as well as men – it is considered to be crucial to conceive, plan, approve, execute, monitor, analyse as well as audit budgets in a gender-sensitive way. It has been self-evident that the proper development and sustainability of any policy depends on adequate funding, budgeting and the ability to mobilise resources. As the European Parliament has highlighted a lack of progress in gender budgeting in the second half of the last decade, it was necessary that both public authorities and sports

organisations dedicate budgets to gender equality in sport, regardless of the numbers of women taking part. Ensuring budgeting that boosts the growth, development and sustainability of a project by influencing the main strategic operations should be a core regulatory goal for all stakeholders (Basterfield et al., 2016; Hulteen et al., 2017). All sports organisations (and their stakeholders) should dedicate part of their operational budget to the development and implementation of gender equality policies and actions. Sustainable provision of public funding is considered to be a key to the development (and long-term viability) of such policies. It was also essential to ensure that sport was included in investment programmes under established gender equality policies (e.g., the EU Action Plan on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in External Action 2021-2025 or the OECD Gender Equality Framework) and to make its inclusion in future policies mandatory. Use of the EIGE gender budgeting toolkit, which was available in all EU languages, could help to achieve this goal. Allocation of a significant part of any public funds must be conditional on the implementation of concrete actions. Based on an initial cost assessment, a cost-benefit analysis, political judgment and prioritisation of projects, an initial affordability decision can be made. It was recommended that public authorities promote implementation of the OECD gender budgeting programme.

Organisations such as the European Institute for Gender Equality, European Association of Sport Management, European Association for Sport Sociology, the European Women's lobby, as well as other European organisations in this field could also play a useful role and partnerships should be promoted. Women as well as men from sports organisations should be more involved in general equality commissions giving guidance to the implementation of plans or strategies on gender equality at local as well as national level. It should be kept in mind that the topic of gender equality in sport was not an isolated topic that could be addressed exhaustively by networks created for that purpose. A multilevel framework targeting at the individual (micro) level, challenging existing stereotypes, at an organisational level (meso) within the boards, and at the sport level (macro) through the introduction and implementation of strategies and policies in the organisations can encourage women to engage in leadership roles (Sotiriadou & De Haan, 2019).

## 6. EXAMPLES OF LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL INTERVENTIONS AS MEMBER STATES LEVEL PROMOTING GENDER EQUITY IN SPORTS

Regulations can be institutionalized through legislation and/or through decisions of the executive board of the organisation. Gender-related regulations within sports organisations could certainly lead to substantial changes as examples in some countries show. Supporting measures or legislation of national sport governing bodies including governments could progress this process, although a lot of resistance exists in several Member States based on governing principles and/or the relationship with the sport movement.

The Norwegian Olympic and Paralympic Committee and Confederation of Sports have included a paragraph about gender distribution in their law (§2-4). This law adopted in 90s states: "When electing or appointing delegates to general assembly(ies), and members to executive boards, councils and committees in NIF and its organisational units, candidates/delegates of both sexes shall be chosen". Suppliants shall not be taken into account when the gender distribution was calculated. The number of female members in national federations' executive boards has increased from twenty-two in 90s to almost forty percent in second decade of 21st century. This is considered to be almost equivalent to the active female memberships in Norwegian organized sports, namely approx. forty percent. The law also covers committees such as election committees that nominate candidates for executive boards. The composition shall be proportionate to the gender distribution among the members, such, however, that there shall be at least two representatives of each of the sexes in executive boards, councils as well as committees with more than three members. In boards, councils or committees with two or three members, both sexes shall be represented.

In the beginning of the second decade, the German Sports Youth published a qualification module about prevention of sexualized violence in sport to be used in sports clubs. Besides, all member organisations of the German Olympic Sports Confederation signed a declaration in which they committed to implement measures of prevention of sexualized violence in sport. Parallely, the German Olympic Sports Confederation also integrated the prevention of sexualized violence in its statutes.

The helpline in the Netherlands in the late 90s, provides twofold assistance: first, care and relief for victims, alleged perpetrators, parents or bystanders and second, redirection (if wanted by the service user) to a counsellor or other service such as general care organisations, police, lawyers or public prosecutors. In the Netherlands there has been an independent institute for sports justice that handles complaints



(Sports court of arbitration, doping as well as sexual harassment) since the beginning of this century. It also developed tools to facilitate communication about sexual harassment or abuse, hand-outs for different target groups, documentary (story telling), information flyers, a website (like [www.nocnsf.nl/seksuele-intimidatie](http://www.nocnsf.nl/seksuele-intimidatie)), as well as guided discussion sessions. In France, the Minister of Women's Rights has proposed a framework law on equality between women and men, which contains a provision on extending the 'List of events of major importance for society' to cover more women's sport events (rugby as well as football). In the UK most coaches have to complete the Safeguarding and Protecting Children Workshop to be allowed to coach children. Apart from that, in Finland the report 'Sport and equality 2011, Current stage and changes of gender equality in Finland' was published by the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture in the early second decade. Furthermore, the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture has published a report Sport and Equality 2011; Current state and changes of gender equality in Finland which covers systematically the mainstreaming of the gender perspective in sports.

In Sweden a general Gender Mainstreaming Manual has been developed by the Swedish Gender Mainstreaming Support Committee, which could be useful for sport.

## 7. PEDAGOGICAL GUIDANCE

### 7.1. Teaching the Topic

When teaching the topic of "Sports Legislation and Possible Gender Discrimination in European Countries," it is important to employ interactive teaching methods that engage learners and foster critical thinking. Consider incorporating the following strategies:

- a) **Interactive Discussions:** Encourage open discussions among learners to explore different perspectives on sports legislation and gender discrimination. Facilitate debates on the challenges and progress observed in specific European countries, encouraging learners to analyze the factors contributing to gender disparities.
- b) **Case Studies:** Utilize real-life case studies that highlight instances of gender discrimination in sports and the legislative measures taken in various European countries. Encourage learners to analyze the outcomes of these cases and propose alternative approaches for addressing gender discrimination.
- c) **Group Activities:** Organize group activities that promote collaboration and problem-solving. Assign learners to research specific European countries and present their legislative frameworks, progress, and challenges regarding gender equality in sports.

### 7.2. Learning Objectives

Upon studying this topic, learners should:

1. Understand the concept of gender discrimination in sports and its impact on equal participation and opportunities.
2. Identify key aspects of sports legislation and policies related to gender equality in European countries.
3. Analyze the challenges and progress observed in specific European countries in addressing gender discrimination in sports.
4. Evaluate the effectiveness of legislative measures and interventions in promoting gender equality in sports.
5. Apply critical thinking skills to propose strategies and recommendations for addressing gender discrimination in the context of sports legislation.

### 7.3. Educational Resources

To support teaching or learning this topic, the following educational resources are recommended:

#### 1. Textbooks:

- "Gender and Sport: A Reader" by Laura Hills and Barbara Humberstone.
- "Women, Sport, and Culture" by Susan Birrell and Cheryl L. Cole.

#### 2. Research Papers and Articles:

- Meier, H. E., Konjer, M. V., & Krieger, J. (2021). Women in International Elite Athletics: Gender (in)equality and National Participation. *Frontiers in Sports and Active Living*, 3.
- Burton, L.J., & Leberman, S. (Eds.). (2017). *Women in Sport Leadership: Research and practice for change* (1st ed.). Routledge.

### 3. Online Courses:

Search;

- "Gender Equality and Sports" on Coursera
- "Women, Sport, and Society" on FutureLearn

## 7.4. Additional Materials

To enhance the learning experience, partners can consider utilizing the following supplementary materials:

### 1. Documentary Films:

- "Battle of the Sexes" (2017) directed by Valerie Faris and Jonathan Dayton.
- "Playing Unfair: The Media Image of the Female Athlete" (2014) directed by Lisa Wolfinger.

### 2. Online Platforms:

- Women's Sports Foundation (<https://www.womenssportsfoundation.org/>): Offers resources, articles, and research on women in sports.
- European Institute for Gender Equality (<https://eige.europa.eu/>): Provides reports, studies, and policy recommendations on gender equality in Europe.

## 7.5. Assessment and Evaluation

To assess learners' understanding and progress, consider employing the following assessment methods:

1. Quizzes or Knowledge Checks: Create quizzes to test learners' comprehension of key concepts, legislative frameworks, and challenges related to gender discrimination in European sports.
2. Case Study Analysis: Assign learners to analyze a specific case study of gender discrimination in sports and evaluate the legislative responses. Assess their ability to identify relevant issues, propose solutions, and critically analyze the outcomes.
3. Research Projects: Assign learners to conduct independent research on a European country's sport legislation and gender equality initiatives. Evaluate their research findings, analysis, and presentation skills.

## 7.6. Case Studies or Examples

Include real-life case studies or examples to illustrate the practical application of the topic. Highlight instances where European countries have successfully implemented sports legislation to promote gender equality, such as Norway's funding models prioritizing gender equality in resource allocation.

## 7.7. Exercises or Activities

Engage learners and reinforce their understanding of the topic through interactive exercises or activities, such as:

1. Role-Playing: Divide learners into groups and assign them different roles, such as policymakers, athletes, or advocates. Conduct a role-playing activity where they negotiate and propose legislative measures to address gender discrimination in sports.
2. Group Discussions: Pose thought-provoking questions and scenarios related to sports legislation and gender discrimination. Encourage learners to discuss and critically analyze the issues, sharing their perspectives and proposing solutions.

## 7.8. Interactive Tools or Technologies

Utilize interactive tools or technologies to enhance the teaching or learning experience, such as:

1. Online Interactive Maps: Use interactive maps to visually demonstrate the varying progress and challenges of gender equality in different European countries.
2. Multimedia Presentations: Incorporate multimedia presentations, including videos or infographics, to provide visual representations of gender disparities and legislative efforts in European sports.

## 8. CONCLUSIONS

Various factors, external to sport, can affect women's levels of participation (e.g. home situation, physical education at school). Actually, more and more women in Europe participate in sport activities. However, a lot remains to be done in the sphere of gender equality. Also, many factors at play within the sport sector itself which can hinder the participation of women (e.g. lack of coaches creating a gender-friendly as well as safe sport environment, indifference from decision-making boards). Many women were today still unable to find the right environment in which they could use their full potential.

Gender equality will benefit the position of women, who for a long time did not have the same human rights as men, but at the same time it will improve the diversity of today's sport sector which is considered to be needed to attract potential sport participants as well as clients and keep them as members or participants active in the organisation, ready to fulfil activities or functions. This approach will, in the long term, also influence boys as well as men. It will also contribute positively to the quality of the services delivered, as women will provide different role models for girls as well as boys, and new, relevant educational approaches which encourage girls as well as women to enjoy sport without disregarding to prepare for a lifelong sporting career. It will establish a safe as well as secure sport environment for girls as well as boys, young women and men as it will raise awareness of the topic, educate instructors as well as administrators on how to handle risks in this field and prevent harm to athletes.

Gender-friendly coaching and guidance might decrease the high drop-out rate of girls as well as women, avoid sexist gender stereotypes in sport as well as create a positive and social educational climate for all. Besides, it should be strongly stressed that gender equality in sport will be economically beneficial for all stakeholders in sport or related industries, including the media because of higher participation as well as popularity of sport and a growing workforce. For many women with a disability or migrant background it is considered to be noticeably higher, it was also using sport as a tool to empower their lives, to have a job, to have a family as well as to be accepted as a citizen in their country without being regarded as 'different'. It will result in a positive effect on the health of women as well as girls throughout Europe. It could be expected that as a result of a gender equality approach, the climate of sport will become more attractive or enjoyable to women and girls, which will lead to an increase in their participation.

There is a noticeable chance for alternative measures or actions taking note of their social as well as cultural environments. A successful national strategy on gender equality in sport follows a balanced approach in setting benchmarks which were realistic and achievable. Examples of effective practice offer additional guidance. Rather than presenting single strategic options, for example, the empowerment of individual women or the setting of quotas, a strategy should take note of how women and men could contribute to gender balance, how the diversity of different groups of women should get specific attention or how multiple discrimination/intersectionality should be addressed. Parallely, the Commission follows a dual approach to gender equality, namely specific actions plus gender mainstreaming. Emphasizing the principle of equality between women and men in all its activities represents a specific mission for the Union. With the entry of an EU sport competence in the Lisbon treaty in 2009 there is nowadays considerable possibility to support specific actions as well as to mainstream gender equality in the field of sport. By describing these options or proposing specific measures, the strategy should help governmental as well as non-governmental sports organisations launch concrete actions and make the necessary policy choices. Such a plan of strategic actions, including a roadmap or action plan, should outline priority areas for EU action on gender equality driving the gender equality in sport agenda forward, reinforcing partnership with Member states, and relevant stakeholders. So far, no concrete actions have been taken at the European level. For that reason, a more detailed coherent plan on a European level with concrete measures in a time frame to reach the gender objectives in sport should be developed.

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## 10. ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. What is the main objective of promoting gender equality in sports?
  - a. To achieve "same" conditions for both genders in all aspects of sports
  - b. To provide comparable or fairly compared conditions for both genders in sports**
  - c. To eliminate gender-related social or biological peculiarities in sports
  - d. To ensure that men and women participate equally in sports activities
  
2. How has the involvement of women in the Olympic Movement changed over time?
  - a. There were no female members in the International Olympic Committee until the early 80s
  - b. Women's participation in the Olympic Games has decreased since the beginning of the 20th century
  - c. The number of female members in the International Olympic Committee has been consistently high
  - d. Women's participation in the Olympic Games has gradually increased over the years**

3. What is one consequence of gender inequality in sports?

- a. **Limited opportunities for women's sports**
- b. Equal pay for equal work between men and women
- c. Increased media coverage of women athletes
- d. Higher participation levels of women and girls in sports

4. What is the significance of gender mainstreaming in sports?

- a. **It helps challenge and change existing stereotypes in sports**
- b. It ensures that women have more leadership roles in sports organizations
- c. It promotes equal pay and opportunities for men and women in sports
- d. It addresses the economic aspects of female participation in sports

5. What role can legislation and institutional interventions play in promoting gender equity in sports?

- a. They can help close the gender pay gap in professional sports
- b. **They can enforce changes in club environments to increase women's participation**
- c. They can provide financial support for women's sports organizations
- d. They can improve media coverage of women athletes and events